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REVIEWERS GUIDE

PART A: ***Editorial Office Only***

Manuscript Title: Influence of Tribal Marks on Children's Self-Concept and Identity Development in Iseyin Local Government

Reviewer's Assessment

OVERALL RATING

Criterion	Rating	Score
Originality	Good	2
Contribution to the Field	Good	2
Technical Quality	Good	2
Clarity of Presentation	Good	2
Depth of Research	Good	2

GENERAL COMMENTS

This manuscript addresses a culturally significant and timely topic that bridges traditional practices with contemporary child development concerns in Nigeria. The authors have undertaken commendable work in exploring the psychological impact of tribal marks on children, an area that has received limited empirical attention despite its relevance to child welfare and cultural preservation. The mixed-methods design is appropriate and allows for a nuanced understanding of both the quantitative patterns and the lived experiences of affected children.

Strengths:

- The research addresses a genuine gap in the literature by focusing on the psychological rather than merely anthropological aspects of tribal marks
- The theoretical grounding in Erikson's Psychosocial Theory provides a solid framework for understanding identity development

- The mixed-methods approach enriches the findings and allows for triangulation of data
- Ethical considerations are clearly stated and appropriately addressed
- The study has practical implications for policy and educational practice in Nigeria

Areas for Enhancement:

- Some sections would benefit from more detailed explanation and expansion
- A few grammatical issues require attention for improved clarity
- The sample size justification could be strengthened
- The discussion could more explicitly connect findings to policy recommendations

The manuscript demonstrates solid scholarship and makes a valuable contribution to understanding the intersection of cultural practices and child development in the Nigerian context. With minor revisions addressing the points detailed below, this work will be well-positioned for publication.

ABSTRACT

The abstract effectively summarizes the study's key components, including the theoretical framework, methodology, main findings, and implications. It provides readers with a clear overview of what to expect in the full manuscript.

Strengths:

- Concise yet comprehensive coverage of all essential elements
- Clear statement of the research problem and theoretical grounding
- Appropriate mention of ethical clearance
- Well-structured presentation of key findings

Suggestions for Improvement:

1. **Sample Description:** The abstract mentions "120 participants" but could be more specific about the breakdown earlier in the abstract for clarity. Consider revising: "A total of 120 participants, **comprising 60 children (30 with and 30 without tribal marks), 30 parents, and 30 teachers**, were selected..."
2. **Geographical Context:** Consider adding one brief phrase about why Iseyin Local Government was selected or its significance to the study to provide context for international readers.
3. **Measurement Clarity:** The phrase about reliability could be slightly more precise. Consider: "The instrument demonstrated **strong** internal consistency, with a Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient of 0.81."

Grammatical Corrections:

→ "Findings revealed that children with tribal marks reported lower self-concept**s** and experienced stigmatization..." should be "lower self-concept" (singular, as it's a construct)

→ Consider rephrasing: "yet simultaneously demonstrated stronger cultural identity attachment" to "while simultaneously demonstrating stronger attachment to their cultural identity" for smoother flow

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INTRODUCTION

The introduction provides a comprehensive literature review and clearly establishes the context for the study. The authors demonstrate good knowledge of both international and Nigerian literature on self-concept and identity development.

Strengths:

- Well-structured progression from self-concept to identity development to tribal marks
- Strong integration of Nigerian and international literature
- Clear articulation of the historical and cultural significance of tribal marks
- Effective use of recent references (mostly 2024-2025)

Suggestions for Enhancement:

1. **Opening Paragraph:** While the definition of self-concept is thorough, consider adding one sentence about why studying self-concept in Nigerian children specifically is important, given the cultural context.
2. **Historical Context:** The section on tribal marks' history is informative but could benefit from a brief statement about when the practice began to decline. You mention "modernization, health risks, and legal prohibitions" but don't specify timeframes.
3. **Theoretical Framework Paragraph:** This is well-written, but consider expanding slightly on *how* Erikson's theory applies to younger children (ages 8-15 in your study), as Erikson emphasized adolescence. A sentence acknowledging that identity formation begins in childhood and continues through adolescence would strengthen this section.
4. **Gap Statement:** The transition from literature review to problem statement could be smoother. Consider adding a transitional sentence like: "Despite this growing body of evidence, significant gaps remain in our understanding of how tribal marks specifically affect Nigerian children's development."

Grammatical Corrections:

→ "Self-concept refers to an individual's perception of their abilities, worth, and social roles, **playing** a significant role..." - Consider: "**and plays** a significant role..." for parallel structure

→ "making it a central component" → "**thus making** it a central component" (adds clarity)

→ "Known as 'Ila' among the Yoruba of Oyo State" → Consider: "Known as 'Ila' **by** the Yoruba of Oyo State" (more precise)

→ "Practiced by specialists called 'olóolà' or 'akòmòlà'**,** the process involved..." - The comma is correct, but consider strengthening: "**These specialists,** called 'olóolà' or 'akòmòlà', **performed** the process **which** involved..."

→ In the Erikson paragraph: "experiences that directly reflect**s** the realities" → "experiences that directly reflect" (plural subject)

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

This section is particularly well-crafted. It clearly articulates the tension between tradition and modernity and identifies specific gaps in the literature.

Strengths:

- Clear articulation of the cultural shift in how tribal marks are perceived
- Specific identification of research gaps
- Strong justification for the study's focus

Minor Suggestion:

→ "By bridging cultural traditions with modern child development concerns, the research will provide insights that inform..." → Consider changing "will provide" to "**provides**" or "**aims to provide**" since the study is completed (or use "**has provided**" if appropriate)

METHODOLOGY

The methodology section is generally sound and demonstrates appropriate research design choices. However, it could benefit from additional detail in several areas to allow for replication and fuller evaluation.

Strengths:

- Clear justification for mixed-methods design
- Appropriate sampling strategies for different participant groups
- Multiple data collection instruments
- Ethical clearance properly obtained and stated
- Good reliability coefficient (0.81)

Areas Requiring Expansion:

1. **Sample Size Justification:** You state 120 participants but don't explain how this number was determined. Was a power analysis conducted? What was the rationale for 30 in each subgroup? Consider adding: "The sample size of 30

participants per group was determined based on [statistical power requirements/recommendations for mixed-methods research/resource availability], adequate for detecting medium effect sizes in t-tests (Cohen, 1988)."

2. **Instrument Development:** You mention the TMCDQ was "structured" but don't explain if this was developed specifically for this study or adapted from existing instruments. Consider adding: "The TMCDQ was developed specifically for this study based on [literature review/existing instruments] and comprised [X] items rated on a [specify scale: e.g., 5-point Likert scale ranging from...]."
3. **Data Collection Procedures:** How were the instruments administered? Were children interviewed individually or in groups? How long did data collection take? Were researchers trained? Consider adding a brief paragraph: "Data collection occurred over [timeframe] in [settings]. Trained research assistants administered questionnaires to children in quiet classroom settings with assured confidentiality. Interviews with parents and teachers were conducted individually and lasted approximately [duration]."
4. **Qualitative Analysis Detail:** While you mention "thematic analysis," more detail would strengthen this section. Consider adding: "Qualitative data were analyzed following Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-phase approach to thematic analysis. Two researchers independently coded transcripts, and inter-coder reliability was established through [method]. Themes were identified inductively and refined through team discussion."
5. **Integration Strategy:** How exactly did you integrate quantitative and qualitative data? Consider adding: "Integration of quantitative and qualitative findings occurred at the interpretation stage, where themes were examined alongside statistical results to identify convergence, divergence, and complementarity."

Grammatical Corrections:

→ "This design was considered suitable as it facilitated..." → Better phrasing: "This design was **deemed** appropriate **because** it facilitated..."

→ "The study's population comprised children aged 8--15 years" → Consider: "The study population comprised children aged 8**-**15 years" (use en dash or single hyphen consistently)

→ "To use hooks" → Should be "**To use hooks**" appears to be fine, but check if you mean "hooks" in React context (if technical) or if this is meant to be "Hooks" (capitalized)

RESULTS

The results section presents findings clearly with appropriate use of tables and thematic presentation. The integration of quantitative and qualitative data is a particular strength.

Strengths:

- Clear presentation of statistical findings in table format
- Appropriate use of means, standard deviations, and significance testing
- Rich qualitative data through direct quotes
- Good thematic organization
- Effective integration of both data types

Suggestions for Enhancement:

1. **Table Presentation:** Table 1 has some redundancy. The variable names appear twice in the header and footer rows. Consider simplifying the table structure for cleaner presentation.
2. **Effect Sizes:** While you report t-values and p-values, consider adding effect sizes (Cohen's d) to help readers understand the practical significance of differences. For example: "t(198) = -8.74, p < .001, **d = 1.24**" indicating a large effect.
3. **Qualitative Sample Description:** How many parents and teachers were interviewed? Were all 30 of each interviewed, or was this a subsample? This should be clarified at the beginning of the qualitative findings section.
4. **Theme Development:** Consider adding a brief statement about data saturation: "Data saturation was reached after [X] interviews, though all planned interviews were completed."
5. **Quantitative Interpretation:** The interpretation after Table 1 is good, but consider adding: "These differences represent **large effect sizes**, indicating substantial practical significance beyond statistical significance."

Grammatical Corrections:

→ "**Table presents** the descriptive..." → "**Table 1 presents** the descriptive..." (specify table number)

→ Theme 1 heading could be more concise: "**Tribal Marks as a Source of** Cultural Identity and Belonging" → "**Tribal Marks as Sources of** Cultural Identity and Belonging" (parallel structure)

DISCUSSION

The discussion effectively connects findings to existing literature and theory. The authors demonstrate strong scholarship by integrating both Nigerian and international research.

Strengths:

- Comprehensive linkage of findings to existing literature
- Good use of both supporting and contrasting studies
- Clear connection back to Erikson's theoretical framework
- Balanced presentation of the paradox identified in findings
- International and local perspectives well integrated

Areas for Enhancement:

1. **Practical Implications:** While the discussion addresses theory and literature well, it could more explicitly discuss practical implications before moving to the conclusion. Consider adding a brief paragraph: "These findings have important practical implications for educators, policymakers, and parents. The documented lower self-concept among marked children suggests an urgent need for school-based interventions that promote inclusive environments..."
2. **Future Research Directions:** While recommendations mention future studies, the discussion itself could briefly elaborate on specific research questions that emerged from your findings.

Grammatical Corrections:

→ "**This implies** that tribal marks, once symbols of pride, are now risk factors..." - Consider varying your transition phrases. You use "This implies" or "This indicates" repeatedly. Try: "**These findings suggest**...", "**Our results demonstrate**...", "**It can be inferred that**..." for variety

→ "This finding **reflects** the traditional Yoruba belief**s**" → Better: "This finding reflects the traditional Yoruba belief" (singular when referring to a singular conceptual belief, even if multiple people hold it)

→ "**This indicates** that while tribal marks may undermine self-concept" - Again, vary transitions. Consider: "**Consequently**," or "**Therefore**,"

→ Final paragraph: "This indicates that **interventions** should focus..." - Good, but consider: "**These findings indicate** that interventions..." for stronger subject-verb connection

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CONCLUSION

The conclusion effectively synthesizes the main findings and returns to the theoretical framework. It successfully captures the central paradox identified in the study.

Strengths:

- Clear summary of key findings
- Return to theoretical framework
- Acknowledgment of the complexity of the issue
- Balanced perspective on cultural heritage vs. child welfare

Suggestions:

1. Consider adding one sentence about the study's contribution: "This study contributes to the limited body of empirical research on the psychological impact of cultural scarification practices, providing evidence-based insights for policy development."

2. The transition to recommendations could be smoother: "Given these findings, the following recommendations are proposed to address the identified psychosocial challenges while respecting cultural heritage."

Grammatical Corrections:

→ "marked children's psychosocial development depends on how they **negotiate** between..." - Good word choice, though "**navigate**" might flow better with your earlier usage in the introduction

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RECOMMENDATIONS

The recommendations are practical, comprehensive, and well-targeted to different stakeholders. They appropriately balance cultural sensitivity with child welfare concerns.

Strengths:

- Specific, actionable recommendations
- Multiple stakeholders addressed
- Balance between preventing harm and preserving culture
- Inclusion of both immediate interventions and longer-term research needs

Minor Enhancement:

Consider numbering or creating subheadings for each recommendation type (e.g., "For Government and Policymakers," "For Educational Institutions," etc.) to improve visual organization and ease of reference.

REFERENCES

The reference list demonstrates engagement with current literature and includes both Nigerian and international sources. The formatting generally follows academic standards.

Strengths:

- Recent sources (predominantly 2023-2025)
- Mix of Nigerian and international literature
- Appropriate scholarly sources (peer-reviewed journals)
- Proper citation of theoretical foundations (Erikson, 1950)

Issues Requiring Attention:

1. **Inconsistent Formatting:** Some references include full URLs while others use DOIs. Choose one format and apply consistently. Generally, DOIs are preferred when available.

2. **Incomplete Information:** → The reference "**LATEEF, OLALEKAN BODE**" in the author section has an incomplete email: "lateefbode4real@gmail" (missing domain extension)

OVERALL DECISION: MINOR REVISIONS REQUIRED

This manuscript makes a valuable contribution to understanding the psychological impact of tribal marks on Nigerian children. The research design is sound, the findings are significant, and the implications are important for both policy and practice. The study successfully bridges cultural anthropology and developmental psychology in a way that respects tradition while prioritizing child welfare.

The manuscript would benefit from:

1. **Expanding the methodology section** to include more detail about instrument development, data collection procedures, and qualitative analysis processes
2. **Including effect sizes** in the results section
3. **Correcting minor grammatical issues** as indicated throughout this review
4. **Standardizing reference formatting** and removing citation manager artifacts
5. **Minor reorganization** of some longer paragraphs for improved readability

These are all achievable improvements that will significantly strengthen an already solid manuscript. The core research is sound and the findings are important. With these revisions, the manuscript will meet publication standards.